

**{As Prepared for Delivery}**

**Kansas Farm Bureau D.C. Visit  
March 14, 2006**

**Thomas C. Dorr  
Under Secretary for Rural Development  
Incidental Luncheon Remarks**

- **Good afternoon. I understand some of you were with us just a few weeks ago at the Ag Outlook Forum. It's good to see you again. And if this is your first visit, welcome.**
- **I'm told you've been on the Hill this morning and that you'll be going back this afternoon for congressional visits. That's great.**
- **The next Farm Bill is a work in progress, and NOW is when you need to be letting your delegation know of your concerns.**
- **On that subject, as Secretary Johanns may have mentioned this morning, USDA held a total of 52 Farm Bill Forums last year.**
- **There was enthusiastic participation. We received over 4300 comments. Obviously, there were some areas where opinions**

differed. But there were also areas -- and I'm glad to say that Rural Development is one of them -- where there was virtually unanimous agreement.

- There's good reason for that. At USDA Rural Development we are in the opportunity business.
  - Yes, rural America faces challenges. But at the same time, there are tremendous emerging opportunities.
    - These include new energy sources ... biodiesel, ethanol, wind, and solar power.
    - They include value added and biobased products.
    - And some arise from new technologies like broadband that level the playing field and make rural communities more competitive than they have been for many years.

- **Turning these opportunities into realities is our mission. And it's a mission, frankly, for which we need your partnership and support.**
- **In that vein, therefore, I sincerely appreciate the work the Farm Bureau -- both National and KFB -- is doing.**
- **I say this not simply as the Under Secretary for Rural Development, but perhaps more importantly as a lifelong farmer from Marcus, Iowa, who has spent many years sitting where you are sitting now.**
- **I believe that those of us involved in production agriculture have not only an opportunity but also a responsibility to get involved.**
- **Just look around this room. Every person here is a community leader back home. If we don't do it, who will?**
- **Whether it's a value added opportunity or an ethanol plant ... modernization of a rural hospital or improved fire protection ... a new water system or broadband hookup ... your interest and**

**support, your leadership, and your willingness to invest makes a real difference.**

- **The American Farm Bureau's MAAPP report, which was issued last November, lays this out in some detail. If you've not read it, I hope you will.**
- **And I hope we can count on your continued partnership in Kansas on energy ... on value added opportunities ... and across the whole spectrum of rural development issues ... to make our communities better places to live.**
- **I look forward to working with you. Thank you.**